Tape #37 Corradina Caruso
Ethnic: Italian

SIDE 1 (Panasonic RQ413AS)

5 Father worked at drafting designs for grapevines in Italy. He came to U.S. without family to earn money and return to Italy in two years.

17 Corradina, her mother, and brother join father in U.S.; a sister and four more brothers born here.

24 Father's friend helped him settle in Lawrence.

28 Started at Walton School on Newbury St. Details of other schools.

35 When father first came from Italy, he lived with a family.

47 When sister born, Corradina's family moved out and eventually found their own place.

50 Father worked in construction. Tried mill work; more money in construction.

54 When he was older, father returned to mills because there was lack of construction work.

57 Left school to work at age 12 after finishing 6th grade. Father felt she was old enough.

71 Stayed for short time at Everett Mills, Wood Mill, and Washington Mills.

93 Describes work as a dopper at Wood Mill.

102 Didn't like Washington Mills; described as "really antique."

106 Started at Pacific Mills at 12yrs old [1918] as a dopper; ruptured appendix one month before 1919 strike.

115 After strike of 1919, returned to Wood Mill for 1 1/2 yrs.; returned to Pacific and stayed until 1934 before birth of first child.

128 Called back to Pacific Mills after baby born. Had physical examination for work. Mother cared for baby.

146 Really wanted to work at Grieco's nearer home.

163 Mostly girls did dopping work; both men and women spinners; young boys set bobbins.

197 Young doing dopping got less money.

202 At Pacific Mills, there were Italians, French, Portugese.

215 Workers under 16yrs. let out an hour earlier: 3:45pm.

236 1931 Strike at Pacific Mills.

244 Some workers destroyed work as they left the mills to join the strike.

274 After work, attended to stove, ironing, and other house chores, then went to the Common to play.

289 Brother in Wood Mill since there were no shoe shops in Lawrence then, only in Lynn, Wakefield, Haverhill, Newburyport.

303 Millworkers paid by the day at first, then by piece rate when shifts added; recalls shifts beginning in 1934.

341 People felt lucky to have jobs. The last hired were the first to go.

349 The bosses (overseers) were mostly men; there were 2nd hands, and section hands (each managing 10 workers).

380 Working conditions: hot in summer, noisy. There were some humidifiers.

399 Mother went to work in mills to supplement income; recalls incident of roller catching in her dress, which affected mother's nerves.

423 Once a strap broke and hit a woman; accidents caused by end of yarn breaking.

SIDE 2

1 Speaks of other millworkers she knew.

15 Strike of 1931: Everyone left; some did picketting, some scabbing; went on for several months.

32 One cause of strike--wage reduction-- was problem in 1919 strike, too. During WWI wages high as $18, but after war wage reduction causes problems.

55 Married in 1925; met husband through family friend in Wakefield; he was from same hometown as mother's in Italy.

75 Engaged for 2 years.

78 Husband worked in paper mill.

81 Not active in union.

90 Had to wait for mill to get replacement for her before she left to start her family in 1934.

96 After brief return to Pacific Mills, began with Grieco Mill in 1935 and stayed until 1971. Worked there as stitcher taught by her sister.

105 Liked Pacific Mills better. Other mills had oil, yarn on floor; Pacific clean.

114 After 1931 strike, transferred from Lower Pacific Mill to building (?) #10--not the same.

124 Workers transferred gradually; machines taken out.

142 People worried when mills began to move; gradually other industries came, eg.: radio tool companies, sewing factories, shoe shops.

156 Feels mills should have moved earlier--describes difficult workload in operating machines.

184 Trying to keep dust from yarn hard work.

193 A ten-day vacation late August to Labor Day.

200 Vacation spent with housework; brother mentions Corradina taught embroidery at home to those interested.

IMMIGRANT CITY ARCHIVES, LAWRENCE MASSACHUSETTS

INTERVIEWEE: CORRADINA CARUSO
DATE OF BIRTH: JUNE 15, 1907
INTERVIEWER:
DATE:
TRANSCRIBER: SUSAN DAVIDSON
TAPE #: 37

Tape One, Side A

CC: My birthday was June 15th, I'd be 6 years old.

I: What did your parents do in Italy?

CC: Well my father, my father used to do grafting, you know like the vines, the grapevine they used to graft those. But then I suppose that he had some of his own (?). Because my father came here just about three years before. Just about three.

I: Do you know why he decided to come here?

CC: I guess he wanted to come too, like everyone else, make a little money and then go back. So he says to my mother, I hear her say this, even when I was older, you know. He says in two years I'll be back. When the two years were up my father didn't come home. So she wrote to him and she says, his name was Lloyd (?), he is passed away now, you said that you were going to stay for two years and then come back home. The two years are up and you're not home yet. If you don't come I'll come there (*Laughs*) you know. If you don't come to me I'll come to you. And that is what happened. It was just my mother, myself, and I had a younger brother. There is two and a half years difference between the two of us. But when she came here after, my sister was born a year later, and she was born on June third the following year, 1913, 1914, June 4th, June 13. A brother of mine was born another one and then another one, and then another and so they stayed forever.

Brother of Corradina: Yeah, and I came along.

I: You had six children in your family then. All together?

CC: Yeah, six

I: Did your father come to Lawrence right away, is that where he settled?

CC: Yeah he settled in Lawrence. He had a very good turn of it. In fact it was my Godfather, that was here before him, and he came, and that is the way it started.

I: So you were six when you got here. Did you go to school when you came?

CC: Oh yes, I started at the Walton school, that is right on Newbury St. it is way down, but now it says manoose(?). And that is where I started. The second grade it was upstairs. The third grade was right at the corner when you turn this way to come down Orchard St. Right across there was a brick building there that was the third grade. They called it the Methuen Street (?) school. And I went there, and from there I went to the public school.

I: Where you living in your own home at that time? Did your parents have a home?

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CC: No, well my father was living with somebody. You know in those days it was just like, today these people who come from, I don't know where they come from, Puerto Rico. And they have one house and they have four bedrooms, nobody had no living room, or no dining room, and all that. They were all bedrooms. And maybe one room...

Interruption (maybe the brother who spoke earlier): Is this on?

I: Yes

CC: And then another room. And my father he was living with these people, in fact one of the sons is still here, he is living. The mother died, but they went back to Rigglia (?). And they were living with them. And of course there was one room where my mother and father, and my brother and myself. And they moved out and went somewhere else where there was a little more room. In fact they are building something right at the corner. But then my sister was born, so then they had a new place of their own.

I: In Lawrence?

CC: In Lawrence, yes. And then they had the rooms and they had a couple and they had a baby.

I: What was your father doing for work then?

CC: Over here?

I: Yes.

CC: Well over here he was working, but he was working on construction. See, he tried the mills, but I guess it wasn't enough money and construction he made more you know. And as the family got bigger, he worked for people for more money. My brother couldn't go to work and help him. That is what happened. So then in the end when he was older he did go in the mills, because the construction was no more. There wasn't much to do.

I: How old were you then when he went in to the mill again?

CC: Oh, I was married.

I: How long did you go to school? When did...

CC: Well I went to school, I was, see what happened, I was twelve, and, but twelve years old, even when I was eleven, I must have been a tall girl for my age at the time. The family was large: "why don't you send her to work?" "But she is only a child." "How old is she?" And then they would be surprised that I was just eleven and then twelve. And then I was twelve, but the school ended.

Brother (?): Want to see something?

CC: Oh a family picture. (*Laughing*)

Brother (?): See how old she was.

CC: I was twelve years old June 15th, and a couple of weeks more the school would end. So they did not let me finish. So I left the sixth grade and was promoted into seventh, but I didn't go. Because I was working. Then, that was during the summer.

I: Did you have to lie about your age to work?

CC: Yeah, I did. Yes, I had to, yeah. And I started in the Everett Mill. Now a friend of mine started a week before I did, because she was older than me. And when she got her first pay, she only got five dollars. Now she had her mother and her sister that worked at the Washington Mills. Of course the Everett Mills wasn't like now, at the time it was all cotton. They used to make, they would dry it and everything. They used to make the cotton material. So she spoke to the overseer, I was with her too. And he says, you know, we haven't got any young people. Because we were under sixteen we couldn't work as many hours as the adults. So we don't know what to pay them, I'll raise a dollar a week until you get to the same amount as the other mills. Like where her sister and mother worked the younger people like the two of us got, I don't remember how much, maybe ten dollars. By raising a dollar a week we had to wait all that time, like five weeks to make it even with the others. So we decided, we left. She went to the Washington Mill and I went the Wood Mill.

I: What made you decide the Wood mill?

CC: Well I didn't know any places. My mother never worked in the mill, she didn't know anything about it. I didn't know where to go. So then one day, winter started to come. You know that big bridge? It started to put up boards, it was awfully cold in the winter. Those days we ... not like now, power up you know. So cold and I had to walk all this way, so I got a job in the Washington Mills because it was closer.

I: What had you been doing in the Wood Mill? What was your job?

CC: Spinning doffer, a doffer. See the picture here, that is just the way it is. This is the cap, the bobbins are here the ones that are full. You pick up the cap, you pick up the bobbin that is empty, with the right hand, with the left hand you pick up the bobbin that is full in here you take that out and you put the empty one in there. In the mean time there is the yarn that you have to twist around with your fingers and make sure that it catches under. Otherwise when you start the machine it won't catch and it will roll around the bottom.

I: So from the Wood you went to the Washington, did you say?

CC: Yes.

I: And that was because it was closer to your home?

CC: Because it was closer. But when I got there I didn't like it, it was awful. Real antique... some of them had half doors, so anyway. I says I don't like it. My... says to me about the Pacific Mills, but I didn't know where it was. So see those people going to work they work at the Pacific Mills. And says follow them. So I did, and I get hired and I get a job. And that was doffing.

I: How old were you when...

CC: I was still twelve in June, this all happened in a few months.

I: I see

CC: And I stayed there I liked it very much. And in the mean time I get sick in December. And I was rushed because I had ruptured appendix, and all that. In the mean time there was a strike going on that was in 1919 strike.

I: Was the Pacific out?

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CC: The Pacific was not on strike, but we didn't know that. The strike ended sometime in May. But that was the wrong company. So when I went back to work I went to the Wood Mill.

I: The Wood Mill? Why did you go back to the Wood instead of the Pacific?

CC: I don't know, I don't know why. And then I stayed not too long. Maybe a year and a half or two and then I went back to the Pacific Mill and stayed there until 1934.

I: So, it was about 1921 then to 19...

CC: Even before that I can't remember exactly when it was.

I: And when did you say you stopped working there.

CC: 1934, it must have been April of 1934 because see I was expecting a baby. And after I had the baby, I couldn't go back, but we were talking about the NRA. I get a cab one day, see I have the baby this was some time in November, I had the baby in June. And then sometime in November I get a card from Pacific Mills, my goodness what can they want from me. It can't be I showed them bad work, and they would find out and calling me now. Because I was called to go to the office. So I went to the office, and they told me to go across the street. I never knew about examining the people before. In my town they didn't do that. And that is the only time from the Everett Mills I did all that in those few months, some people work in a while then leave and go someplace else. In the mean time I did hear of people being examined for, after they get hired for a job.

I: This was a physical exam?

CC: A physical examination, yeah. And that is what they did to me. And I went back to the office and they says to me, you're supposed to work tomorrow, I was stunned because the baby was small. I didn't want to leave it. But then I figured, well my mother is home. And you couldn't buy a job. Jobs were so scarce, during the Depression. It was only like six to twelve or twelve to six. One day you're working six to twelve the next day you worked from twelve to six. That is the way it was every other day.

I: That would be hard, switching schedules back and forth

CC: So I say, I'll take it. Because I was waiting to go to Ricose (?). Ricose was closer to home. We lived down on Newbury St. and Ricose was on Connecticut. And that is what I did. After I got the call from Ricose I went to Ricose and I stayed there, I retired from there.

I: I want back track a little bit for a minute. When you, was your family supportive of the 1919 strike? Was your father, did your father, your father was doing construction work at that time. But you didn't work at all during that?

CC: No, well no I didn't work because I was operated on, I cannot forget because it was the week before Christmas. It was December 18th. At the time I didn't remember, but after one day I surmised it myself, that it was on a Wednesday – came on the 18th. It must have been the date. They took me there and they operated on me right away. It was wretched. And that is it. By the time I come out, I was there four weeks. See it was the middle of January when I come home. And I couldn't go to work right away, had to recuperate and all that. And I couldn't go to work.

I: When you, how long were you a doffer?

CC: A doffer. Well see the frames, they called them the frames, the machines. They knew that I was older, fourteen when I started. I was less than 15 when I started.

I: And that was at the Pacific?

CC: Yeah

I: Was it mostly women that did doffing and spinning?

CC: Yes, no – there was men who had spinning too. And then doffing it was mostly women because the boys would set bobbins. See the picture here. Where is the picture with the spinning?

I: I think it is back here.

CC: Now that was spinning. Now the boys would put the rovers up here because when these were empty we'd have to take them from here and put them there. Sometimes they'd keep them in a big part of the cruck (?), it was just like a limb. And we'd take them from there. But then there was the younger boys who did this job a little more. I don't remember how much more I don't even know the prices. But they did get more money than me. Then the doffer. Here is the doffer. See these are the full bobbins, taking them out of here and putting them here. Now over here we'd find the empty bobbins; now there used to be boys to do that job, because the bobbin stays. And those would be boys.

I: When you were doffing were there a lot of young children doing that work?

CC: Oh yeah, just the younger ones would do that work, not the older ones. Because you'd get less money. To be a spinner you'd get more money and the doffers would get less money.

I: And was it mostly, at the Pacific was it mostly Italian people who worked there?

CC: No there was Italian, French, Portuguese. In fact I met Portuguese, and one of them I was coming there that I knew, it was the first time that I met her. She told me she was Portuguese. So I knew a Portuguese. And she told me that was my sister. Yesterday I was talking some more about her and I mentioned somebody else. And this was another time, and she was my cousin.

I: I got some names of people that I want to get in touch with over there. I was over there the other day talking to some folks. Tell me about what a typical day as a spinner might have been like. What time did you go to work?

CC: Well now I don't remember.

Brother: We worked on Saturdays

CC: Well in those days we worked, the ones that were under sixteen would work a little less. I don't remember, maybe an hour less during the day. And I really do not remember the times that I went to work. I think that it was quarter of eight in the morning. And at night we'd come in, I don't remember, six thirty, five o'clock, five thirty. It wasn't five it was later than that. But then if we started in the morning with the adults we'd come home earlier around quarter of four. I think it was around quarter of four. And the others worked until five thirty. I started in 1918. I remember about the strike. You could hear the people from inside the house. And they would go "forty-eight, fifty-four"; They would go along, "forty-eight, fifty-four". And that meant that they were working fifty-four hours and they wanted to work forty-eight hours.

I: And get fifty-four hours' pay.

CC: Yeah, well sure get a raise and work a little. But you see the Pacific Mills weren't on strike then. But after that the Pacific Mills went on strike, and I remember.

I: But that wasn't until 1931 though was it?

CC: I think that it maybe around that. I remember we were in the room. People started to holler, "STRIKE, STRIKE, get out , STRIKE". I was just stunned you know, everybody was getting out. And some people they just would get out, they were a little mean they put there hand. See the way these come down over here. Now these here, the boards would be down to hold the thread that went in over here. And when these were down you could see the thread coming from here to there. And they put there hand on and pulled all the yarn. No, they were destroying.

I: And what was your job at that time?

CC: Oh then I was a spinner. I had the crane.

I: Were you in an affiliation at that time? In 1931 when the strike came?

CC: No there was no union then.

I: Can you tell me a little bit about that strike?

CC: See that there the boards are open and down. Sometimes the ends would break. While the machine was running you'd have to catch your bobbin with this hand and being stopped you could find the end of the yarn. There was a little hole in the board. Hold it up while it is going and put your thread down and try to join it together.

I: I see, I see. Lets backtrack again. When you were a young girl working in the mill. You said you'd probably get off like four o'clock in the afternoon. Then did you go straight home?

CC: Oh yeah, where else would I go?

I: And did you get play time? When did you get a chance to play?

Brother: She used to bring us to the Common

CC: No that was in the summertime. In those days you know there were coal stoves, wood stoves, and we'd have to cook in the summer with a wood stove. That was even before I went to work. I was the oldest and probably have a lot of clothes to iron. I'd be the one to iron them. And after I finished ironing my mother would let us kids go to the Common. And in those days you'd buy a ice cream cone for a penny. Wouldn't be as big as the ones today. So everyone would have a penny to buy the ice cream cone.

I: Did your brother go into mill work when he was young?

CC: My brother the one next to me, yes. But he was in the Wood Mill. In those days there was no sewing factories in Lawrence, no shoe shops in Lawrence. The shoe shops would be in Lynn, Wakefield...

I: Haverhill

CC: Newburyport. No shoe shops in Lawrence. Just the mills. Before that they started to come. Been here since 1929.

I: So you worked as a spinner from about 1921 on. And that, did you ever have any other jobs?

CC: No, I worked in the mill that was a full day's work. And we used to work on Saturdays a half of a day, too.

I: Were you on piece rate or day pay?

CC: It was day pay but then they put it piece rate.

I: Do you remember around when that might have been?

CC: I know that was just before I stopped working. I was going to have another baby. Then when I went back to work for a couple of months. Maybe not even a couple of months. I went in and somebody would look at it and mark how much they thought there was, and then they mark that for the press(?) and the leather goods(?). See once upon a time we'd work full days and those machines would be left where they were and it would be our work the next day. When we were working just, they had two or three shifts. So when you worked in two shifts. When I left somebody else was going to work on the same machines that I had.

I: The mill wasn't originally operating on a twenty-four hour?

CC: Well I don't know about the twenty-four hour, but I know that they had two shifts. First shift and second shift. And it started in the morning, I don't remember about seven o'clock. That was before I had the baby. In 1930. And then they'd have the lunch hour and I'd come home at two o'clock. And we'd leave and the others would start working until about eleven at night. And they didn't have a lunch hour, they used to work late hours, maybe a little bit more.

I: When they switched to piece work did people object to that? Do you remember that as being an issue?

CC: Well the issue was people thought that is the way it was. In those days, like I say, people were lucky to work. Because if you were one of the last ones on a job. And then the work would slow down, those one were the first to be out.

I: Were your bosses mostly men?

CC: Yeah, they were all men. The boss would be the overseer and then the one under him would be the second hand, and then, those were the one who took care of the whole room. And then there'd be a section hand. See he'd have a section. And they'd have, I don't remember exactly, maybe ten people. Those ten people would not only be the spinner they'd be the doffer, the spinner. The doffer wouldn't be only one. To doff on a frame there was more than one girl. And you'd take, if there was four doffers, you'd do half each. Sometimes there's be two doffers and you have to doff the whole. They always had more than that, 4 or 5 doffers. Because sometimes you'd be right one after the other. And it would take longer to get that doffed and start.

I: What were your memories of your bosses?

CC: Oh, talking about the bosses. And then we'd have, somebody oiling where the bobbins would go. Somebody would be putting up the things that you had to touch. All men. It was awfully hot.

I: Yes, what were the working conditions like in the spinning room? Was it hot?

CC: Well there was no air conditioning. In the summer it would be very hot.

I: Was there proper ventilation?

CC: Well they used to have, I remember, humidifiers. Sometimes you could see that vapor.

I: Was it a noisy job?

CC: Oh yes, it was noisy very noisy in the mills, oh yes. You couldn't talk from here to there.

I: Was it dangerous work?

CC: Well you had to be careful. See my mother went to work when my brother, my youngest brother, I forget how old he was. We were six and my father was alone working. Then in the winter they didn't work much on construction. So she figured she'd would help. She was in the French drawing. And then it happened, I guess she was women's schools. One of the rollers must have got her... See you didn't work like this, we used to have a house dress, and that must of change in there(?). We all used to do that. The women changed.

I: And your mother got her dress caught in the machine? And was she hurt?

CC: Well she was hurt, I guess her nerves.

I: Was it common for people that you were working with to have injuries? Was that a common thing to happen?

CC: You mean to... Sometimes things happen. I know people, the straps, they'd have wide straps like this, for the machines to go. Some were low and some were high. I know people that the straps were high and one of them broke. And it hit the woman. Sometimes the end of the yarn would break and it would roll, I can't even remember what you call them, we had to use a knife to cut all that yarn from there. And this one girl she used, you're suppose to cut around down this way. Well she must have gone the wrong way, she must have gone like this. Well that knife, I don't know how it happened...

Tape one Side B

CC: We had friends

I: Did you see them outside of work?

CC: Sometimes

Brother: The Lady with the blue hat.

CC: It is hard to remember, she was younger than I. I had friends, there was one that worked there, she's in California now, she's coming in May. And there is another one, she hasn't worked for long, but she lives in the, North Andover... but she is not well. When I heard about it, I went to see her, she walks with a cane. She wasn't very lucky her husband died and she had a son that passed away. Now I know she lives in Methuen, but I don't know where. She worked in the Pacific Mills, but she worked in another, I don't know what they called them, another – green boxes or something like that. Before we get that yarn, the balls of yarn, it would pass through where she was working.

I: I want to go back again to the 1931 strike. You remember people running through the mills, getting people out. What happened next?

CC: Well everybody went out, and after that they had to go picketing, or some would go scabbing.

I: Were you on the picket line?

CC: Sometimes I would go and look to see what went on.

I: That was quite a long strike, I think? Several months?

CC: It did last along time. Well all strikes lasted a long time. You take the one in 1919. That was the American Woolen Co. That lasted from January, it didn't end until sometime in May. I remember that. In fact, one of my sister-in-laws her husband, her uncle, her father's brother. They meant to shoot someone else but they caught him.

I: This was in the 1919 strike?

CC: Yes the 1919 strike. I was a child at the time, had, had my operation.

I: In 1931, I think that the issue that people went on strike over, was an announcement by the mill owners that, of a general 10% wage reduction in Lawrence for everybody . Does that coincide with your memory?

CC: They had a wage reduction, not then, they had a wage reduction because I remember there was a war going on, the first World War. And the people were making up to 18 dollars a week and that was a lot of money. After that things went bad and the people had to get reduction.
And that was after, it could be maybe the 1919 strike. Could be.

I: I think it could be the '31 one as well.

CC: I don't remember that part.

I: Was the Pacific totally shut down at that time? Were you out of work for a while?

CC: But I don't remember for how long, then it ended.

I: How did it end, do you remember that?

CC: Let's see now, and I cannot remember now, I think that was the beginning of the strike.

I: The strike started on Oct. 7, early in October, And I don't have an end date on it.

CC: You know who worked there with me, Mary Calladino. Mary Calladino, she probably would remember. See I got married, did she get married?

I: What year did you get married?

CC: 1925

I: And how had you met your husband?

CC: Oh, he was over here and I don't know. We didn't go dancing, especially the Italian people didn't go out on dates.

Brother: She met him through a cousin of ours, the family knew the family in Italy.

CC: My mother used to say, well this my mother said after, she didn't even know he was here. Because he come from Italy he was living in Wheatfield, with his uncle and aunt, and then he

happened to come here. To Lawrence. You know how you meet people of your friends and they say who you are and all that. And then they came I guess he asked, he didn't ask me to go out with him, because it wasn't fashionable for the Italian people in those days. When we were engaged, my mother was talking about it, because come to find out that his mother and father lived near by. Because he was from the same home town. My mother used to say, when I was born, she cannot remember if it was him or another son. She come to see my mother and the baby which was me, and she say this is like my son's girl.

I: That is wonderful. Did you know your husband when you were engaged?

CC: Oh yes, we were engaged for almost two years.

I: Now where did he work?

CC: Now where did he work? He worked in the paper mill.

I: So after the '31 strike you went back to work. Do you remember, what is your memory of unions at the Pacific?

CC: There wasn't a union I don't think, was there a union at the Pacific Mills?

I: I have found a few references to the Amalgamated being there, the ATWU, before it became the ACTWU. But ...

CC: I don't remember anything about that. I know that they had some kind of, I don't know what they called it, but you put money in there and then if you needed money you could go and borrow from there. I never, I didn't participate in that.

I: You quit the mill in '34 and that was when you started having children.

CC: Well, I was going to have the baby in a couple of months. Actually, I told them that I wanted to stop, but they told me I had to wait until they found somebody else.

I: Did you go back to work after your child was born.

CC: Yeah, like I says I get the card, they send me a card.

I: And then how long did you work at the Pacific again?

CC: Not too long, it must have been sometime in November, just a few weeks because I wanted to go in Greico that was close to home, and then I worked there.

I: And when did you start at Greico's?

CC: 1935

I: You stayed there how long?

CC: Well I stayed there from 1935, to 1971.

I: What did you do there?

CC: I was a stitcher, back pockets. My sister she was the one who taught me, she was there before I was there. I never wanted to go to Greico's I don't know why. You know why, I think because they

sit down all day long. And I don't think that I could sit there all day. The first time I worked at the Pacific mills, like I says I followed those people and I got hired. I liked it very much. In the other places you see oil on the floor and bobbins on the floor, yarn and you had to be careful where you walked. But there, there was no bobbins on the floor no yarn on the floor. It was clean they washed the floors every week. I really liked it very much, I stayed there ... After that strike things weren't the same.

I: After the '31

CC: After that strike things weren't the same.

I: In what way?

CC: Well this was in the lower mill, you know. Then they transferred us because the lower Pacific was closing. They transferred us to Number 10. And really it wasn't like over there.

I: The lower Pacific was closing because they were moving south?

CC: They must have, but then I understand, when I wasn't there anymore, I understand that people were working in the lower Pacific.

I: Was everyone that worked in the lower Pacific transferred to Number 10?

CC: Yes

I: Were there any layoffs as a result of that?

CC: That I can't remember, because they didn't take us there all at one time. There would be two there one day, and maybe a couple days would pass and then a couple more gradually, not all at one time. And then there were so many machines that we still had all the gear. Some of the machines they were breaking them and taking them out. But some of the machines...

I: They were breaking them?

CC: Some of them they called them framed and they left them there. And I understand that they went back. One time while I was at the Number 10, there was some kind of yarn, maybe there was a reason, I don't know if it was because they couldn't run it over there or something, they didn't have the right machinery for it, and they took us back but just for a couple of weeks, that is all. And then went back to the Number 10.

I: Were people glad, or did the move to Number 10 make a difference? Or were the people angry about it?

CC: It was fine we were used to here, but over there you'd get used to after.

I: You worked with all new people, or mostly with the people that you worked with?

CC: No, people, there was other people there.

I: What did your family and friends think about when the mills started to moving south?

CC: Well, people were worried. They figured that the mills are all moving out, what will we do, what else is here? But gradually other industries started to come. The had a place where they were making

radio tubes, and they had light shops and new sewing factories, there was one on Chandler St. I couldn't remember that name the other day.

I: Why do you think they moved south?

CC: I have no idea. To me I feel that things were changing and there was a demand for more money, I guess. And they felt they could pay them cheaper over there. I feel that they should have moved away a long time before that.

I: Why do you say that?

CC: Why, because really working in the mills wasn't anything that you had to be an expert at, like you take the sewing factories. It is a little different to working in a sewing factory and one of those mills. You had to clean those machines, as the machine works it makes a lot of dust and all that dust from the yarn accumulates, accumulates around the gears, you know what the gears are? And you have to clean that up. Sometimes they give you rags, we had to do that, and sweeping under the frames. And then came a time when they gave us more machines and more frames to carry. Like one time there was three and we did our own cleaning. Then they gave us five, and six and then there was a cleaner to do that. Some of the girls were spinners and they had to go back to cleaning, they'd get less money. I happened to get spinning.

I: But you had more work to do.

CC: Of course, I had to take care of more, when the rovers were finished we had to fill them up, take the empty ones out and put the full ones in. It was dirty. And then there was the roller on the side you'd have to put grease on that. You'd have to, sometimes the yarn would go around that, you'd have to pull it out and clean it, it was real dirty. I used to feel sorry for some of the girls. Sometimes we'd give them a hand in helping. You couldn't clean those boards while the frame was going on. Because otherwise dust would go in the yarn and it would form slubbs, and that wasn't right, so you'd have to do that while the frame was stopped. And by the time those girls were doffing those boards would be up and you couldn't clean them. So it was a bother, it was too much, too much. And the summers were awful.

I: Because of the heat?

CC: Well the heat and the frames themselves bring heat.

I: Did you work shorter hours in the summer?

CC: No, same thing. I don't remember the hours what time we started, around seven maybe, seven to five thirty.

I: What about vacation? Did the mill shut down in August?

CC: Our vacation used to be about ten days, around August, like the last week of August to Labor day.

I: The whole Pacific would shut down then?

CC: Yes

I: How did you spend you vacations?

CC: At home, trying to catch up with things we didn't do. In those days we used to have mattresses, and they were different filled and we used to do all that. Do some of the special cleaning at home.

Brother: She used to teach embroidery by the machine.

CC: Well that was something else now.

I: That was in addition to your work?

CC: That was at home, like girls wanted to be taught how to embroider and I would teach them.

I: In the evenings?

CC: On a Saturday, the postman used to come at night, or ones came in the afternoon because we had a half of a day.

I: It sounds like you spent an awful lot of time working.

CC: Yes that is all working, and that is why I cannot stay without working. I have to have something to do. I can't stay without doing anything. Watch TV, when I'm sitting and watching TV I am doing something. Otherwise I may be baking, or I look to see who it is.

I: Mrs. Caruso I appreciate you talking to me. It has been a terrific interview, I've enjoyed it a lot. I have one question to ask you, I am trying to talk to other people who worked in the Pacific, in any part of the Pacific not just spinning or where you worked. I wondered if you had some suggestions of people I might, people that you worked with or know.

CC: This girl she worked in another department... She lives now in these ... are you from Lawrence?

I: No, but I know the city very well.

CC: You know those little buildings that they built, on the corner of Broadway and Essex. She was the first on to go and live in those apartments.

I: And she worked in the Pacific?

CC: Yes, the Pacific

I: I could ask her, I have her phone number.

End of Interview